

Three Categories of Interpreters

Certified interpreters

Certified interpreters have passed the Administrative Office certification examination. To date, certification programs have been developed for Spanish, Navajo and Haitian Creole. In these languages, the courts will select interpreters who have met the Administrative Office's criteria for certification if the judge determines that certified interpreters are reasonably available.

The Administrative Office's [Spanish-English Federal Court Interpreter Certification Examination](#) is administered in two phases. Candidates must pass the written exam in order to qualify to take an oral examination. The oral examination measures a candidate's ability to accurately perform simultaneous as well as consecutive interpretation and sight translations as encountered in the federal courts. The certification programs for Navajo and Haitian Creole are no longer offered.

For other languages, individuals may contact local federal courts to determine if that court has a need for the language of expertise. The [local federal court](#) will determine on a case-by-case basis whether the prospective interpreter is either professionally qualified or language skilled. In languages other than Spanish, Navajo and Haitian-Creole, interpreters are designated as:

- professionally qualified and
- language skilled.

Professionally qualified interpreters

The category of professionally qualified interpreters applies only to languages other than Spanish, Navajo, and Haitian Creole. Credentials for professionally qualified interpreters require sufficient documentation and authentication, and must meet the criteria in one of the following:

- (a) Passed the State Department conference or seminar interpreter test in a language pair that includes English and the target language. The State Department's escort interpreter test is not accepted as qualifying.
- (b) Passed the interpreter test of the United Nations in a language pair that includes English and the target language.
- (c) Is a current member in good standing of:

- (1) [Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence](#) (AIIC); or <http://www.aiic.net/>
- (2) [The American Association of Language Specialists](#) (TAALS); or <http://www.taals.net/>

The language pair of the membership qualification must be English and the target language.

- (d) For sign language interpreters, someone who holds the Specialist Certificate: Legal (SC:L) of the [Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf](#) (RID).

Language Skilled/*Ad Hoc* interpreters

An Interpreter who does not qualify as a professionally qualified interpreter, but who can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the court the ability to interpret court proceedings from English to a designated language and from that language into English, will be classified as a language skilled/*ad hoc* interpreter. Certified and professionally qualified interpreters are paid at a higher rate than language skilled/*ad hoc* interpreters.